



THE FUTURE OF DIGITAL CONTENT MANAGEMENT: **A GROCERY LEADER'S GUIDE**

How Grocers Can Gain an
Unfair Advantage Through
Modern Ecommerce
Experiences





Contents

4 Introduction: Why Digital Experience Will Make or Break Grocery Brands

Why does a modern approach to digital content and eCommerce experience matter so much right now? And what can you expect from this guide?

7 The Ever-Moving Grocery Content Goalposts

How has the grocery industry changed in recent years? And what does that mean for grocery brands and the consumers they're selling to?

10 The Two Biggest Content Challenges for Grocery Brands

What challenges are grocers facing in the wake of a changing industry? From rising competition to ageing technology, we cover it all.

14 The Answer to Faster, Easier, More Effective Content Management

Learn how headless architecture and a composable commerce approach can help you overcome the challenges we talked about.

21 Next Steps

Ready to transform your approach to digital content and eCommerce experience? Find out how to get in touch with our specialist in-house team.



Introduction:

Why Digital Experience Will Make or Break Grocery Brands

We know what you're thinking: here comes yet another line about the pandemic changing the way we do things forever.

But we wouldn't be giving a full and clear picture if we didn't at least touch upon the impact of Covid-19 when it comes to grocery shopping. 62% of shoppers were ordering groceries online at least occasionally last year, jumping from just 34% in February 2020, according to a [Food Marketing Institute report](#).

And it isn't just digital natives driving these numbers – online grocery shopping increased among all age groups, with 78% of Gen Z, 88% of millennials, 36% of boomers and 34% of mature shoppers doing it at least occasionally.

In fact, digital grocery sales are expected to grow another 20.5% in the US alone this year to a staggering \$147.5 billion, [according to Insider Intelligence](#). And this figure could be as much as \$243 billion by 2025.

But the truth is, even before Covid-19 forced a spike in online buying, the challenges grocery brands are facing now were already brewing.

While many of the larger grocery brands were early pioneers of eCommerce, the platforms they invested in back then were very much of their time: great for scaling and managing millions of products – not so great for the kind of modern, timely, multichannel digital experiences that consumers have come to expect today.

A recent [Appinio study](#) asked consumers to choose the most important features of an online grocery service or platform. 70% said an 'easy to use platform and user-friendly shopping experience' was either important or very important – the highest rated of all the options, even beating free delivery and price-matching.

Clearly digital experience matters to grocery consumers and it's something that grocery brands need to get right, not just today but in years to come. But there are a number of technical challenges currently holding them back.

In this guide we're going to explore some of those challenges in detail. But most importantly, we'll talk about how to overcome them.



The Ever-Moving Grocery Content Goalposts

When you look at the traditional goal of a grocer, it's really quite simple: get the maximum number of people into your store – whether online or physical – and sell them as many things as you can in the most efficient way possible.

This means the content on grocery sites has traditionally been limited to one simple product image. After all, how many angles of a box of chicken nuggets does someone need to make a buying decision? The grocery industry has been, and still is, about pushing product in the fastest and most efficient way. What's now changing is the type of products and the way consumers engage with those products. Grocers still need to be able to push their core food and drink products as fast as they always have. Yet the introduction of new ranges, from fashion and electronics, to toys and homeware, requires a different approach.

Taking Inspiration From Lifestyle Brands

Take a look at your favorite online lifestyle eCommerce store, whether it's fashion, home, appliances or anything else. Unlike the chicken nuggets we mentioned above, it's hard to find a product page that doesn't have multiple shots of the same item. Not to mention a shot of the product 'in use' (a top being modelled, for example, or a sofa in a living room) and perhaps even a video or two. If you're trying to sell products like these, that is the kind of content experience

consumers have come to expect. And it's the kind of experience you're competing with online. This information isn't exactly breaking news to grocery brands, of course – many have already started creating more experiential eCommerce journeys of their own. ASDA in the UK, for example, uses its 'baby club' site to help drive audiences towards its range of baby and toddler products.

But when you look at that site, the content is a far cry from the nuts-and-bolts product information we mentioned earlier. Instead, you'll find detailed advice on anything from breastfeeding to choosing a car seat. This editorial approach is less about pushing products and more about building trust with an audience. Content-based, storytelling-led experiences like this have become the hallmark of successful eCommerce brands in recent years. Do grocery brands have the power to replicate that success? And if so, who will be the ones to nail it first?



From Change Comes Opportunity

High quality content experiences like these don't come without a lot of time, effort and resource, of course. But there is a significant opportunity here for the grocers that get it right – an opportunity that far outweighs any cost it takes to get there.

While it is getting increasingly difficult to compete on price or product alone, there is still plenty of room to stand out and be a leader when it comes to your digital experience. To create scroll-stopping stories related to what you're selling and use them to build your brand, grow your audience and claw back customer loyalty.

Easier said than done, of course, when working with an outdated, monolithic content platform.

In the next chapter we'll discuss some of those challenges in more detail before exploring the steps you can take to start overcoming them.

Chapter Summary

- Pushing core products is still important, but new ranges like fashion, electronics, toys and homeware require a different approach to the commerce experience
- Content-based, storytelling-led experiences have become the hallmark of successful eCommerce brands in recent years – grocers should take note
- While it's getting harder to compete on price or product, there is still plenty of room to stand out and be a leader when it comes to your digital experience



The Two Biggest Content Challenges for Grocery Brands

There are two main challenges that grocers are facing right now:

1. Rising competition
2. Outdated technology

These two points are intrinsically linked. It's because of rising competition (driven in part by the changing consumer habits we covered earlier) that grocers' current technology is being pushed beyond its limits when it comes to the digital experience they can offer.

By solving point two, grocers will have a much better chance of solving point one. On that note, let's go into each of these challenges in a little more detail...

1. Rising Competition

Whichever way you spin it, the grocery market is becoming more competitive every year.

There was a time that people would shop at the same supermarket every week. Now you have multiple options to choose from in any one town or city (all relatively similar in price and product).

“Of those 61%,
18% are switching
between at least
three providers.”

62% of Americans live near three or more grocery stores, while 29% live near four or more, according to a [study by Appinio](#).

You're also competing with multiple brands online, including digital-natives like Amazon, which is set to account for 23.8% of online US grocery sales between 2018 and 2023, according to [eMarketer](#) – second only to Walmart.

At the same time, customer loyalty is not the same as it once was. It's becoming harder and harder to entice people into your store with loyalty schemes. And attracting and retaining customers online is a daily grind with moving goalposts, whichever industry you're in.

Only 39% of US consumers exclusively use one online grocery service, which means 61% use two or more, according to the same Appinio study. How, then, do grocers engage with consumers online to attract more customers and keep them coming back again and again?

The answer lies in your digital experience. Today you need to be offering timely, personalized content to people wherever they happen to be, on any device or channel. Not so easy to do when your current technology is holding you back, of course, which brings us on to the second point.



2. Outdated Technology

Now let's talk about the tech side of things.

Big supermarkets were some of the first brands to 'digitally transform' their approach to selling in the early days of the eCommerce revolution.

The monolithic platforms they invested in really were transformational at the time. By today's standards, however, they make life somewhat difficult when you're trying to create the kind of content experiences we covered in the previous chapter.

These platforms are – let's face it – pretty slow and clunky. And they need a lot of manual technical work to make any significant changes to the frontend experience, not to mention a lot of staff and plenty of outsourcing costs – all just to keep the architecture up and running.

The monolithic approach was necessary at the time, of course. Supermarkets had millions of products they needed to get online as quickly as possible. They needed one big system that could scale fast and allow them to update pricing or change product information on a day-to-day basis at an enormous scale.

But that's the point here: those monolithic platforms were great for scaling – they're not so good for modern, fluid, content-led customer experiences.

“But that's the point here: those monolithic platforms were great for scaling – they're not so good for modern, fluid, content-led customer experiences.”

Online shopping is much more experiential now. People are empowered to do their homework before they make a decision. They know how to research products and brands and they expect more than just a simple image and description.

75% of consumers are more likely to buy from brands that offer personalized digital experiences, according to [a study by Yieldify](#).

And in another [study by Salesforce](#), 97% of marketers reported an improvement in business results due to personalization. The problem is, no matter what grocers want to do, many simply can't execute on those plans effectively because of their current content architecture. So how do you go about solving these problems?

In the next chapter we'll explore what grocers can do to overcome their current content architecture issues, transform their approach to content management and become much more competitive as a result.



Chapter Summary

- Pushing core products is still important, but new ranges like fashion, electronics, toys and homeware require a different approach to the commerce experience
- Content-based, storytelling-led experiences have become the hallmark of successful eCommerce brands in recent years – grocers should take note
- While it's getting harder to compete on price or product, there is still plenty of room to stand out and be a leader when it comes to your digital experience

The Answer to Faster, Easier, More Effective Content Management

As we said in the previous chapter, the main thing stopping grocers creating the kinds of content-led digital experiences they want is outdated technology. Those old monolithic content management platforms have served grocers well. They’ve been able to manage a huge amount of scale over the years. But times have fundamentally changed, especially in the past few years, and the monoliths simply can’t deliver what grocery customers want and need today.

So what can you do instead?

Introducing Composable Commerce

Unlike the all-in-one monolithic content platforms, a composable commerce approach is about bringing the best of different technologies and applications together in one place, all working as one to suit your specific needs.

Think about it like an orchestra. If all the different technologies and applications are the instruments, composable commerce is the conductor, bringing the best musicians in the world together and making them play in time (and in tune) together.

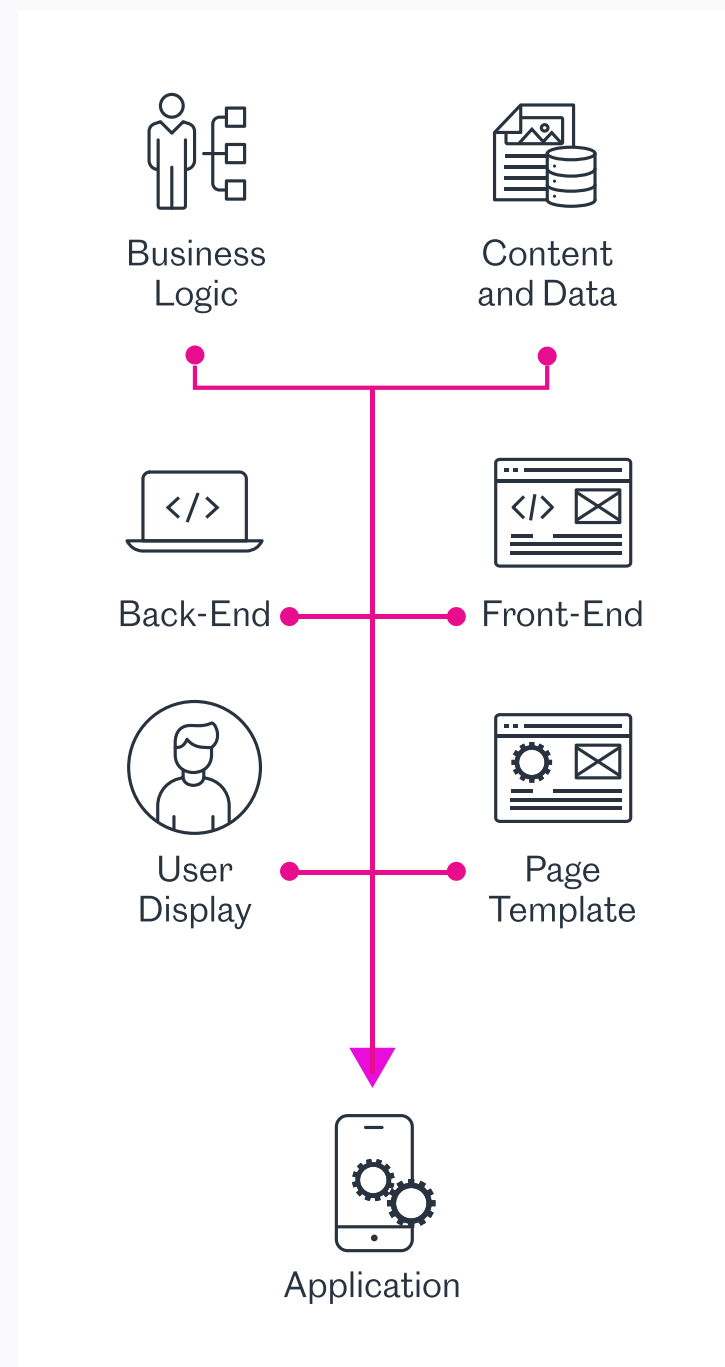
THE RESULT?

- **Change and scale a lot faster:** frontends and backends don’t need to be tied together, meaning response times remain high during high traffic periods and you can test and iterate more often with less risk.
- **Capitalize on new opportunities:** with no platform lock-in, you can bring together vendors you know and trust and take advantage of new experiential technology.
- **Better, easier personalization wherever your customers are:** composable commerce allows you to easily incorporate a whole range of personalized and contextualized content, products, search results. Anything you want, wherever you want it.
- **More freedom to innovate:** focus on any capability that you know will drive value for your business, from further integration of data and analytics to streamlining payment and shipping options.
- **Launch new content quicker:** Composable commerce allows you to iterate more. There’s no more waiting around with long release times. It’s a much more rapid test and launch process that means you can learn quickly but also see value quickly.

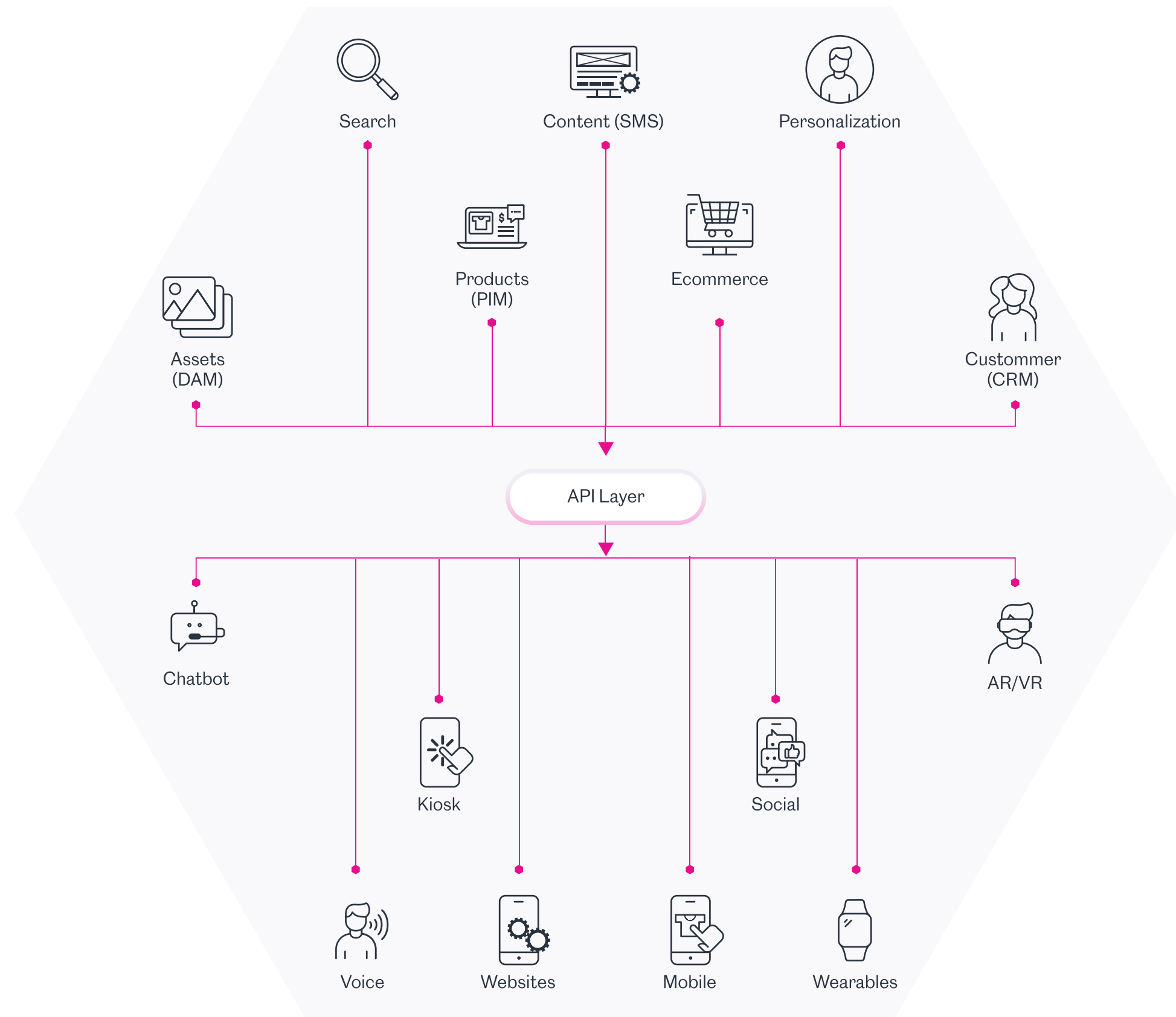
Want to Learn More About Composable Commerce and Headless?

Check Out These Additional Resources





Monolithic Approach



Headless Approach

Real-World Examples of Headless Success

Multibillion Dollar UK Department Store

- Moved from monolith to headless
- 8x more deployments per year
- Boosted revenue faster
- No longer had change freezes during holiday periods

Natura & Co

- Moved to Salesforce for flexible and scalable headless commerce
- Built an API-led live shopping app in three weeks
- 100% increase in conversion rate during live shopping event

Liberty London

- Integrated Ampliance Headless CMS with Salesforce Commerce Cloud
- 66% reduction in content production time
- Asset management streamlining led to major boost in SEO and mobile traffic
- Acceleration of conversion growth especially in overseas markets

Traeger Grills

- Moved to headless for commerce experiences
- Site loads 2x faster
- Site conversion increase
- Daily web releases instead of quarterly

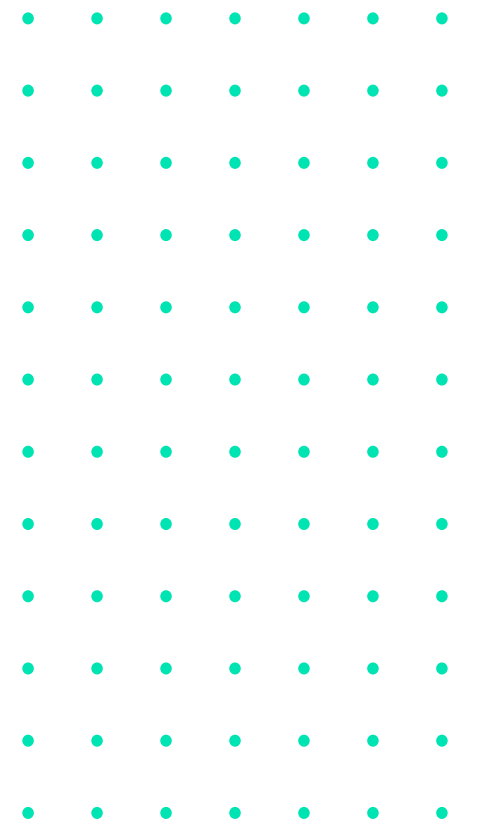




Next Steps

Ready to take the heavy lifting out of digital content and transform your eCommerce experience?

Get in touch with our expert team by emailing contact@ampliance.com or visiting ampliance.com



Amplience is a commerce experience platform that takes the heavy lifting out of digital content, giving your technical and marketing teams the freedom to create digital experiences without limits. The platform's MACH Alliance-certified architecture delivers maximum speed, agility and scalability.

More than 400 of the world's leading brands use Amplience, including Crate & Barrel, Traeger Grills, Ulta Beauty, Coach, OTTO Group, GAP, Currys, Argos and The Very Group.

Amplience has 200 global employees and has raised \$180 million from investors, including Farview Equity Partners, Sixth Street and Octopus Ventures.

Visit www.amplience.com for more information.

Experience **FREEDOM**



Amplience UK
6th Floor Tower House
10 Southampton Street
London, WC2E7HA, UK
+44 20 742 6990

Amplience USA
234 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY
10001, USA
+1 917 410 7189

contact@amplience.com
www.amplience.com